

29 November 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with the President, Secretary Rusk, Secretary McNamara, Mr. Bundy and DCI

RE : Surfacing the OXCART

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

I opened the meeting by advising the President that the OXCART program started as a ~~furthur~~ development of a Mach 3 plus reconnaissance plane which could fly any place in the world with aerial refueling. The original program called for ten A-12 reconnaissance planes, all of which ~~were~~ *are* now in being and one lost in a crash.

In addition the Air Force were procuring through CIA 5 reconnaissance versions, 3 long-range interceptors which involved a modification (2-seater versus 1-seater), and a total of 31 reconnaissance bombers.

I stated two of the interceptors were operational, a third would be operational shortly and three of the Air Force reconnaissance planes would be delivered shortly. Then there would be a hiatus of several months because two Air Force reconnaissance planes were modified for a special purpose (details not discussed) and the 31 reconnaissance bomber versions involved substantial modification.

The development and the CIA and Air Force reconnaissance planes (15 in number) would cost about \$700 million, of which about \$400 million have now been spent and I had been advised by Secretary McNamara that the entire program of 49 aircraft would cost about \$2 billion.

I pointed out to the President and radar cross-sections features of the plane through which we hoped to ~~make~~ the plane "invisible" to Soviet radar. This has been successful inasmuch as the radar cross-section was in the order of 1/1000 of normal (such as a B-52), but that we also knew of advances in the Soviet radar capability and therefore felt that this plane could probably be detected but we had not concluded as yet that the Soviet SAMS could actually intercept the plane.

NOTE: In a preliminary discussion prior to meeting with the President, McNamara stated that the A-12 could be

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JUL 1999

detected by the ChiCom SAM radars. I questioned whether this was true, stating I had been informed that the early warning Fan Song radar would have to make the initial detection and then alert the SAM site radar so that they could pick up the plane as it approached. I would like to know what is correct in this regard.

I then stated that the question of surfacing was raised for three reasons:

1. Crash of a plane might bring public notice.
2. Visibility of the program as flying increased and the military versions came into being.
3. Concern that technology developed would give Lockheed and Pratt and Whitney a special position on the SST which would be unfair to other contractors.

I recommended that:

1. DoD and CIA agree on a statement that would be valid to cover:
 - a. Leaks
 - b. A crash
 - c. An executive decision to surface
2. That we not surface for the foreseeable future as doing so was not strictly necessary and would expose an intelligence resource and had some political implications.
3. I arranged to brief selected individuals of companies actually active in the SST program so that they will not be in a disadvantageous position.

The President then requested Secretary Rusk's views, who responded that there was no foreign policy problem but that he felt that if we were to surface, advance information of 2 or 3 days should be given to certain foreign countries such as England, Germany, France, Japan, Australia, etc. In balance Rusk thought it better to make an advance release as a direct policy decision rather than be forced to make an announcement because of a crash or a leak.

The President requested McNamara's views, who strongly urged that we surface in the immediate future. He stated he could not see how the reconnaissance capability of CIA would be impaired as we would maintain our fleet of planes and our operations intact

He noted that increased flying, more planes, a higher rate of expenditure (and he repeated the \$2 billion figure of which about \$400 million is spent), all made it virtually impossible to maintain the same secrecy in the future that we have maintained in the past. Moreover, if he could present the bomber version to Congress, he could eliminate a great deal of criticism, could cut out at least one B-70, saving at least \$75 million, and the technology could be spread among the hundreds of engineers and scientists involved in the SST.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

The President then decided and ordered that:

- a. We prepare a surfacing paper.
- b. Get as many planes produced as quickly as possible.
- c. Hold up the surfacing as long as possible, perhaps into the Spring.
- d. Review the subject again at the end of January or in early February for further policy consideration, and
- e. He personally will discuss with Halaby.

All agreed with the decisions and Mr. Bundy undertook to reconcile the differing views between CIA and DoD on the surfacing paper. I then gave Mr. Bundy copies of our mark-up of the DoD paper and also a copy of Dr. Wheelon's paper.

NOTE: Bundy has arranged for Dr. Spurgeon Keeny to serve with him on technical matters on a part-time basis and it is Keeny who is working directly with Bundy on this paper

JAM/mfb